

# TOWN MEETING



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**"WHAT SHOULD OUR SCHOOLS ACCOMPLISH?"**

**DR. JAMES R. KILLIAN, JR.**

**With Delegates to The White House  
Conference on Education.**

**Moderator:**

**GUNNAR BACK**



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**BULLETIN OF AMERICA'S TOWN MEETING OF THE AIR**

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## "WHAT SHOULD OUR SCHOOLS ACCOMPLISH?"

**ANNOUNCER:** TOWN MEETING tonight originates from The White House Conference on Education in Washington. The first ever held in the annals of American Education, the Conference climaxes more than a full year's study of this country's educational problems. Beginning with local and state meetings, the current Washington sessions are the culmination of many hours of study and research into major problems facing our elementary and secondary schools at present and in the months and years ahead. The Conference is attended by 2,000 delegates from every state and territory. Originally proposed by President Eisenhower in his State of the Union Message to Congress in January, 1954, the White House Conference has looked into six major areas of concern to education and the general public. One of these is the basis for tonight's TOWN MEETING.

Now, to preside as moderator of the discussion, here is the well-known Washington commentator, Gunnar Back. Mr. Back!

**MR. BACK:** Good evening, friends. TOWN MEETING tonight is taking you to the White House Conference on Education where you will hear a portion of the proceedings termed by President Eisenhower as "the most thorough, widespread and concerted study that the American people have ever made of their educational problems." Gathered here in Washington are some 2,000 delegates -- broadly representative of educators and interested citizens -- the majority of whom were selected by state governors. You will hear from a number of these delegates during the next hour. They are discussing educational problems which are of direct concern to each of you listening -- parents, teachers, taxpayers, every citizen.

The emphasis of the conference is on elementary and secondary schools -- for it is in this area that we face a severe crisis. Let me give you a few figures to illustrate the problem. In the past ten years, we have had an increase of one-third in the number of pupils in our classrooms -- and we face another increase of one-third in the decade ahead. Suppose we put it another way. For every 100 students today, we had only 72 in 1945. In 1960, we will have 121 -- and for every 100 students today, we will have 136 ten years from now.

Furthermore, all of us are aware of teacher shortages. Exactly what is the situation? Today we have somewhat more than 1 million teachers in elementary and secondary schools. By 1965, we will need to bring into our school systems an additional 2 million teachers to take care of the increased school population.

And here is where you come in -- as a taxpayer. At present, we are spending about 6-1/2 billion dollars a year to educate our youngsters between the ages of 5 and 17. Five years from now, it is estimated we will have to spend an additional 4 to 6 billion dollars a year on operating expenses.

During the past week, the White House Conference on Education has concerned itself with six major aspects of these problems. Tonight's TOWN MEETING brings you a report on one of them: WHAT SHOULD OUR SCHOOLS ACCOMPLISH? Before we decide what buildings are needed to meet increased enrollments, or how to get more teachers in our schools, or how to meet the financial requirements, it seems only logical to determine what we want our schools to accomplish. Should they prepare a child to fit into his future role in our complex society? Or should they restrict themselves to the fundamentals -- the three R's? What aspects of education are the responsibility of the home, the church and the community? Where should public-supported education begin and end?

To keynote these basic problems, we will hear Dr. James R. Killian, Jr., President of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who served as chairman of a conference subcommittee studying the questions to which I have just referred. At the conclusion of Dr. Killian's address, we will sit in on an informal discussion by delegates of this historic meeting. We now hear Dr. James R. Killian!

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DR. KILLIAN: Mr. Chairman, members of the Conference and guests. There is a common saying in college circles that the one member of a college community that is certain to receive a liberal education is the president of the institution. I can add to this statement now, after having served on this committee on "What Should Our Schools Accomplish?" that this, too, is a way of obtaining a liberal education. Some of this liberal education has come to the committee by way of the mail. We have received a most extraordinary volume of fan mail that you can imagine on this subject, "What Should Our Schools Accomplish?" Some of this mail the committee itself solicited in order to subject its working papers to the critical eyes of laymen and experts holding different -- and usually vehemently different -- points of view. We thus sought to make sure that our presentation of background material to you was as free of bias as we could possibly make it.

However various and conflicting the tasks urged upon our schools by our correspondents, several common and compelling notes run through all the letters -- a deep-seated commitment to our system of universal education, an almost frightening belief in education as a sovereign remedy for all of our social problems, and a conviction that our educational system, even though we may think it the best in the world at the present time, is not nearly good enough for our youth and for American society. In this correspondence, I suspect, is to be found a cross section of national thinking and aspirations for our schools. And in the diversity of views reflected there is found further justification for this great national town meeting, where our diversities can become better understood, our coefficients of tolerance established and our common convictions calibrated.

In discussing school goals, it seems to me that three errors are most often made. First, there is the temptation to think that a school program which is good for one's own community must be good for all communities. The diversity of education in America is often acknowledged, but it is so great that it is difficult to recognize fully. In discussing the question then, "What Should Our Schools Accomplish?" I found it useful to answer some questions one way for rural schools, one way for suburban and small-town schools, and one way for large urban schools. Then I tried to find common denominators in my three answers, and necessary qualifications. There are, of course, many factors other than the size of the community which must be kept in mind. Regional differences, economic differences, differences in the desires of the people -- all of these things and many others make it impossible to arrive at glittering generalities which apply to all communities.

A second commonly made error is to think exclusively of one's own son or, in a slightly broader sense, of one's own kind of people, when planning school curricula. I am struck by the number of presumably intelligent college graduates who apparently think that the sole business of American schools is to prepare youngsters for college -- preferably an Ivy League one. I am equally shocked by enthusiasts for other aspects of education who apparently forget that one extremely important function of schools is to prepare youngsters for college.

Certainly we must all keep in mind the fact that the needs and ambitions of children vary even more than American communities do. Our schools are designed to help all children, and the needs of children of different ability, different background and different aspirations must constantly be kept in mind when attempting to answer our first question, "What Should Our Schools Accomplish?"

Because of my work with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, I am, of course, interested in the early identification and encouragement of youngsters with scientific ability. I find, however, that I must constantly keep reminding myself that although the education our future scientists and engineers get is increasingly important, the education of other kinds of people is also important, as the Vice President emphasized last evening. No one segment of our population can be considered to be privileged when determining school goals.

A third common error is to grow so interested in some one aspect of education that the need to devise a balanced program for the students is forgotten. To many



people, education for citizenship is of over-riding importance. Others feel strongly that better facilities for handicapped children are needed, or that more attention be given to the gifted.

The question we must ask ourselves, however, is not whether this course or that course of instruction has any good in it. What we must ask ourselves is, what school objectives are the most important for a given community. For there are limits to what the schools can attempt. First of all, there are limits of money, and even if these can be completely overcome -- and they usually cannot -- the student's time is limited. Schools can't attempt to offer students every useful kind of instruction in the world. Instead, school administrators must help each student to use whatever years he has most advantageously. Time is the most precious ingredient of all in education. The average student has only a few pennies of time to spend on his education and he can't buy everything in the store. It is up to his elders to help him spend his time as wisely as possible, -- to purchase not just a lot of little educational trinkets, but something which will sustain him all his life. Let us never forget the preciousness of the student's time. As long as we remain fully appreciative of that, I believe we will find ourselves thinking in terms of educational priorities, rather than in terms of omnibus lists, thinking of excellence rather than coverage.

This business of priorities is all the more complex because of the fact that education has not one purpose, but several. To the question, "What Should Our Schools Accomplish?" it is not unreasonable to add, "For what?" For the individual, for the community, or for the nation? In Nazi and Communist societies there isn't much doubt about that question. Their schools are arranged to shape youth to the needs of the state. It is, of course, a tradition in our own country to consider the individual paramount; we should not think of subordinating the educational desires of an individual to the needs of the state. Freedom to get the kind of education one wants for one's children and for older students to get the kind of education they want for themselves, is perhaps as important to us as freedom of speech or freedom of the press. The only restraints on that freedom are the need for a student to have ability commensurate with his ambitions, and some way of paying his educational expenses if he is not in a public school. Freedom always encourages diversity -- that is the chief reason why one's community public schools are often very different from another. I am sure that we all agree on at least one thing our schools should accomplish: the preservation of freedom of education. We insist upon keeping this freedom even if some of the tidy advantages inherent in standardization must be foregone. We are all well aware that standardization and freedom rarely go together. And we cling to this freedom for the individual even though it looks at times as though the welfare of the nation were suffering from it. As the Vice President emphasized last evening, we need science teachers in the schools today even more desperately than we need other kinds of teachers, but there is no way we can impress students into programs which will prepare them to be science teachers. The American system of granting complete freedom of choice in education, and of placing the desires of the individual above all other considerations, will in the long run, I am sure, be best for this nation.

This does not mean that our system of emphasizing individual needs is free of distortions and poor guidance and failure to help individuals gain an adequate understanding of the range of choices available in our society. Most responsible individuals want to meet the needs of their country, and the desires of the individual often coincide with the needs of the society, provided they have good ways of learning what these needs are, and frequently they do not. Personal opportunities are often created by national needs -- the national shortage of engineers has led to good jobs for young engineers and, as a consequence, can bring about an increase in the number of students seeking training in this field. It is my hope that as the need for teachers of all kinds, and science teachers in particular, grows more acute, teaching jobs will be made more attractive in all possible ways, and the shortage will be met in a way natural to our society. One objective of the schools certainly is to provide the skills our nation needs both in peacetime and in war, and there is no inherent conflict between that and providing free rein for individual desires.



A short time ago a group of scientists were discussing the quality of advanced education in the sciences in the United States. One of them, a distinguished Nobel-prize physicist, as a result of his experience at the Geneva Conference, observed that it was his judgment that we now have some of the strongest graduate schools of science in the world, but that it was his fear that they would not be the strongest ten years from now because of some of the things that some of the other nations are doing. This reflection points up our immediate national problem with respect to our over-all system of education. Are we doing the things in all fields of education today which not only will keep America competitively strong, but which will meet the intellectual and the spiritual needs of our society in the years ahead? Ladies and Gentlemen, we should keep this broad question before us as we search our minds about the aims and goals of our schools.

MR. BACK: TOWN MEETING is reporting from the White House Conference on Education. We are going to listen in on a round table discussion by conference delegates on the topic: "What Should Our Schools Accomplish?" These are typical citizens, sitting down together, discussing the problems of our elementary and secondary schools -- problems which exist today and which will be amplified by increased enrollments in the immediate years ahead. Let's hear what these people have to say.

Presiding as chairman of this particular round table is Mr. Charles J. McNeill of Dayton, Ohio, General Manager of George A. Pflaum, Publisher, Inc. The delegates joining in the discussion are: Mr. E. M. Benton, Los Angeles, Education Counselor of the California Taxpayers Association -- Mrs. Walter E. Burkhardt, Towson, Maryland, a housewife -- Dr. E. B. Evans, Prairie View, Texas, President of Prairie View A & M College -- Miss Helen Huntz, South Bend, Indiana, an elementary school teacher -- Mrs. Elaine Miller, Passaic, New Jersey, a housewife active in civic affairs -- Mr. Emory Ross, New York City, President of the Phelps-Stokes Fund -- Mr. Daniel V. Skala, Erie, Pennsylvania, High School Principal and President of Pennsylvania State Education Association -- and Mrs. Betty Tableman, Lansing, Michigan, a housewife and member of the Governor's Educational Finance Commission.

I might mention that there are 165 other round tables in progress simultaneously, discussing these very same problems. Our broadcast will close with a report of the consensus of all these groups as compiled by a combined meeting of the chairman presiding at each table.

Come with us now to round table #118, where Charles J. McNeill is leading the discussion on the topic: "What Should Our Schools Accomplish?"

MR. Mc NEILL: We are here trying very quickly to answer some very basic questions and the questions have to do, I think, with what all of our American schools should accomplish. As we heard from Dr. Killian, there are many good things that might be done if we had the money and the staff and the facilities but I think we're going to get at what really must the schools offer.

MRS. MILLER: I think that there should be more of a balance in the vocational training in our school systems. I know right now in our own particular state there is one particular community, and it is a rather large one and does not give the child who will have to go into a vocation rather than to a higher education the opportunity to learn a trade. Frankly, I have been interviewing people and asking why these things happen and I learned that -- and this happens to be a school where there are needy children whose parents do not make too much money: it's the poor section of the community -- when a teacher who was a new one and very ambitious and eager to teach said to the principal, "Why don't you teach these children how to make something," his answer was all he was interested in was how to build a birdhouse. He said, "I just have a few more years to go and why look for trouble -- why make more work for myself; they're satisfied with what I'm doing." This was practically unforgiveable because these children have to learn a trade, but he wasn't willing to make the effort to do it. Therefore, I feel that there should be more of a balance in the community as far as vocational training is concerned for these people.

DR. EVANS: I think the speaker this morning mentioned a balanced program also -- the same thing that you are talking about -- he mentioned that this morning in his report.



MRS. BURKHARDT: I feel with all special parts of our education, this is sort of a summary of vocational as well as any other type. The total curriculum should place higher emphasis on those subjects which everyone needs to study to acquire a broad general education. It should likewise include those subjects which will satisfy the special interests and vocational requirements of the pupils, provided that a sufficient number will take the subjects to make their inclusion in the program practicable and economically desirable. We have situations in Maryland where we do not have enough children to go off far afield into special places; yet we have other areas where vocational studies or skills are necessary; but I think your integrated program, as Mr. McNeill has it here, really is the secondary and not necessarily the first objective.

MRS. MILLER: Well, frankly, I don't feel this way because I don't think we're honestly being concerned then with the child who cannot go to school and doesn't have the potential for higher schooling. Unfortunately, there are many such children in our society. I think only a very small percentage -- I know in our community which is a very good one for college -- about 58% of the children go on to higher education; that leaves 42% not going on to higher education and fortunately in our community too they are able to learn trades. But thinking about another community where perhaps the percentage is likewise, there are 42% of these kids who are not learning an actual trade. They're learning reading, arithmetic and spelling and they're leaving that school with just this -- besides the horrible attitude that happens to exist among the supervisors themselves. We're giving them absolutely nothing and this is the kind of a community that I am primarily interested in.

MR. BENTON: Is it the job of the schools to train people in all trades?

MRS. MILLER: Shouldn't there be a few specific trades.

MR. McNEILL: Would this answer the questions both of you are asking? It is buried in the middle of my paragraph there. Some people are not interested in or equipped for further development of their intellectual powers through further academic training should be offered an opportunity in the schools for occupational training geared to their interests and aptitudes. Specific job training, however, is secondary and not necessary, I think essential, would be a better word.

MRS. MILLER: I agreed with your entire paragraph until you came to the part where you considered it secondary, and I don't feel that this is secondary. I think it is one of our primary concerns, particularly today when you consider the delinquent child and children who have no further future for themselves and will turn to naughty things and, therefore, aren't functioning properly.

MR. McNEILL: "Secondary," perhaps, was a bad word. What was in my mind there was that there are certain things that must be offered to all and there are some specifics that must be provided in specific cases or communities.

MRS. MILLER: Then would you cross out "secondary?" This is the word I object to.

MRS. BURKHARDT: I might say that we spent about two hours on this subject because we had several professional vocational people in our group and so it was a well-discussed thing, but we finally all agreed on this as meaning pretty much what we wanted. The total curriculum should place primary emphasis on those subjects which everyone needs to study to acquire a broad general education. It should likewise include those subjects which will satisfy the special interests and the vocational requirements of the pupils, provided a sufficient number will take the subjects to make their inclusion in the program practicable and economically desirable.

MR. BENTON: I move that we accept that.

MR. BACK: Charles McNeill, chairman of this conference round table, now leads a discussion on another point.

MR. McNEILL: We come to the question: What should be the role of the school in the development of emotional maturity? My comments on that are very brief. I am a complete layman in that field. I do feel on the basis of experience that it is



a thing that we could spend the next six months discussing.. I tried to put a very general answer to that question and to combine the emotional with certain other problems in the same very general area. Will you read my brief comments on that?

MRS. BURKHARDT: "Emotional Maturity. -- Where funds and staff are available, special services should be provided for the gifted child, the slow learner, the mentally or physically handicapped and the emotionally disturbed."

MR. BENTON: I have a question there. I do not think it is the function of the schools to assume the responsibilities of institutions with mentally disturbed youngsters or anybody else. Treatment should not be an educational function, it should be an institutional function. We have a particular problem in California where there is all kinds of pressure that the schools assume the responsibility of educating youngsters with an IQ of 50 and below. This, in my estimation, is no function of the schools. That's an institutional problem -- it's not an educational problem because those kids are not educable. If the treatment were voluntary it would become an essential part of the educational program, the schools would be forced to take on this function and it would be very, very costly.

MRS. MILLER: Mr. McNeill, when you wrote this you involved more than one....

MR. MCNEILL: I involved a number of things that I think are problems in the same general area, though varying among themselves.

MRS. MILLER: What kind of terminology would you give to the children who are not retarded in the sense that they don't need to be institutionalized and yet are mentally retarded?

MR. MCNEILL: Severely retarded.

MRS. MILLER: In talking about this person I feel that there certainly should be an area for schooling for the child who does not have a potential of too much learning and yet is not mentally unbalanced.

MR. SKALA: The gifted child and the slow learner -- those would both be included in what you are saying. The rest of them would not-- the mentally or physically handicapped and the emotionally disturbed.

MRS. MILLER: No, the handicapped, I feel, should have a place in our society, in our school system.

MR. BENTON: I think I'd withhold judgment certainly on physically handicapped ones. If they are educable they could maybe be given a place in society where they could be useful citizens.

MRS. TABLEMAN: In Michigan right now we have a tremendous institutional problem for the mentally retarded children. I couldn't tell you the IQ range, but apparently a number of them could be handled at home in school districts if the school districts had special programs and a pilot study has been developed in a few of the western Michigan counties, to see how these children could be handled in a home-school situation. It would be a great saving actually to handle them in that way.

MRS. MILLER: These are called the workshops in the community, aren't they? They've started one now in Essex County in New Jersey and I understand it's working out very well. As a matter of fact, I'm interested and would like to start this sort of thing in our own community. There are certain mentally disturbed children who reach a certain age limit and then our institutions find that they have reached their potential and won't keep them. We have to make a place for these children to learn.

MR. SKALA: One thought I had is that this should involve all boys and girls. In my thinking it is good mental health and I am wondering whether we are just thinking of the extremes. There is a body of experience in the teaching of all boys and girls which should come under this area and it bothers me when you say "when funds and staffs are available." In other words, that means many boys and girls will be excluded. I think that this is a real thing to everyone and should be found in all schools.

MR. MCNEILL: When we need psychologists or psychiatric treatment and things of that sort -- that is "extremes."

MRS. MILLER: We're giving them an out when we say funds are available -- this is extremely important. It's a shame that we haven't time to develop it much further.



MR. McNEILL: Even the gifted child in the normal classrooms, we can meet without a lot of special funds.

MR. BENTON: You're not going to do much with mentally and physically handicapped and emotionally disturbed youngsters if you don't have specialists.

MR. McNEILL: It would depend on the degree of their disability or their disturbance.

MRS. MILLER: I started to move, Mr. Chairman, that we accept your answer to question #4 on "Emotional Maturity" but strike out "where funds and staff are available" and have it read "special services should be provided for the gifted child, the slow learners, the mentally and physically handicapped and emotionally disturbed."

MRS. BURKHARDT: We came to the conclusion that this was an area in which there is right now being held a great number of workshops and research, etc. In other words, this is an area where the educators themselves are now working; they realize that we have educable and non-educable children. They also realize that the schools have been having the responsibility for many of those non-educables that they shouldn't have, but somebody has got to do it and we have said, as you have just pointed out, that we think the public schools should educate all children. That means we either should be able to educate them along with the average or we should know where they should be educated so that it seems to me this answer is a good one, and if we're not going to say "where staff and funds are available," if we could say there perhaps something along the lines that we feel that further research must take place.

MR. SKALA: I'd like to have something like that in there.

MRS. BURKHARDT: Let's acknowledge the fact that it isn't a finished subject.

DR. EVANS: It's important, too.

MRS. BURKHARDT: That's right. Recognize that it's important and there is a long way to go on it.

MR. McNEILL: I think we should proceed to number 7 to stay in order with the agenda as we have set it up for ourselves. Mrs. Burkhardt, will you read the question and my comments.

MRS. BURKHARDT: "Granted that non-public schools have unquestioned freedom of action in this area, what, if anything, can the public schools do about the religious and spiritual development of the young?" "A system of ethical values which will guide men in their moral judgments and control their conduct in society is fundamental to the ideas, ideals, attitudes and habits necessary for right living in our American democratic society, In training the young for responsible citizenship, the school must provide students with the opportunity to acquire compelling convictions based on sound ethical principles. Ethics finds its most solid basis in religion and the recognition of the dependence of man referred to in the American Declaration of Independence and positively protected in the Bill of Rights of the United States. In determining the proper role of the schools in the religious and spiritual development of the young, a distinction must be made between the public and the non-public schools. The non-public school has and should have complete liberty to provide such religious and spiritual training as is desired by those who support and maintain their schools. This right is firmly established in American tradition and jurisprudence. Though many Americans are convinced that religious instruction is an integral part of the child's regular school experience, the public schools supported by taxation may not teach positive religion as such. It can, however, and should teach such basic, moral and spiritual values as truthfulness, honesty, integrity, fair play and regard for the rights of other persons, and it can cooperate with parents and churches in providing a workable and lawful program of regular religious instructions through the released time plan now successfully operating in many states. The released time program represents the finest kind of cooperation between public schools and religious groups. It is a voluntary program which recognizes the educational rights of parents and respects their freedom of religion. It does not involve the public school in teaching of religion. Where, for whatever reasons, the public school cannot or will not cooperate in a released time



program of religion education, it should, out of its obligation to provide a broad general education, help people to understand the role of religion in American and world history and in human affairs today. The very integrity of the public school demands that it deal with religion, factually and fairly, whenever religion is relevant to the understanding of regular school subjects. Indeed, fair and right-minded men devoted to truth can expect such treatment of religion in the public school as a minimum in this area of education."

MRS. MILLER: I don't believe in released time from the normal school day. Is that what you read to us?

MRS. BURKHARDT: I read about something I don't know anything about. I don't know this program.

MR. McNEILL : This program is established by law in a number of states, by which children are released from the public schools at specified times to be instructed in religion under whatever auspices the children and/or their parents decide. The constitutionality of that kind of program has been upheld in the Supreme Court. Its constitutionality, I think, is unquestionable at this point. Its lawfulness in any particular community depends upon state legislation and where there is state legislation empowering this kind of program, the constitutionality has been upheld by the Supreme Court of the United States. I might add that so far as I know the legislation on this matter, there is no state legislation that requires any child to attend any of these programs, but it gives him the opportunity to do so if he and his parents desire it.

MRS. MILLER: If there is a set curriculum for the school day of the child, then the child is losing part of what they came to school to learn if they are missing time to go elsewhere. Frankly, I don't know why this particular hour couldn't be injected at the end of the school day as so many of our children do.

MR. McNEILL: In many cases that is done.

MRS. MILLER: Then why do we have to take away from the time that we find so valuable and there is a constant complaint that the children are not getting enough learning time in the schools today? Why should we deprive them then of this half-hour or this hour -- perhaps they must travel -- to do something that they could very easily do when they're through with their normal schooling day?

MR. McNEILL: I think that the feeling in the states where this kind of program has been adopted and the feeling of many people over the country, is that some kind of religious instruction is an important part of education. Our public schools by law and by Constitution cannot provide that specific kind of education but children are children of parents and the right of parents to determine the schools they attend and the kind of education they will receive also is clearly established. In the areas where a state passes legislation empowering this kind of program, then that portion of the school week becomes a normal part of the school's program in that state and nothing we can whip up here is going to change this legislation. What we're trying to do here, I think, is answer a question which has been very forcefully put to us in our home.

MR. SKALA: Would it help a little if, instead of using the word "religious" we used the words "moral and spiritual values?"

MRS. BURKHARDT: No, that wouldn't change it.

MR. SKALA: I mean as far as school work is concerned and within the school program.

MR. McNEILL: I have tried to make some distinctions in saying that the schools can and should teach basic moral spiritual values, such as truthfulness, honesty, integrity.

MR. McNEILL: Then we go on to, is there any way that the schools can cooperate in setting up a lawful and effective program of religious instruction, not given by schools and not on school property.

MRS. MILLER: Well, you see, I am so strongly against this that I could sit and argue it with you for hours and I'll tell you why. I can sum it up very simply



and very easily. We must firmly believe in the rights of all people and we want our kids to go out of school with a healthy attitude. Let's face one fact. There are many parents who do not give their children proper religious training -- we know that -- and no matter how much released time you give them, how much mandatory time you give them, these parents will not send their children away. They'll still remain in that group at the time when some children leave.

MR. McNEILL: That's true.

MRS. MILLER: Now, suddenly you're putting doubts in the childrens' minds. You're making them a little different and a little apart. I shouldn't make this analogy but perhaps if you're separating the emotionally disturbed child from the normal child, again you're making this separation and the child starts wondering if there must be something different about him. See, you're starting him thinking and this is harmful, I feel. I believe in religious training firmly. My child leaves school at 3:30 and has his two hours of schooling immediately after school, but he also has his whole complete school day and he doesn't feel that he's different or that the other child is different because they are leaving a normal classroom. Now, why can't any parent, just as I do with my child, give him this particular religious education when he's through with his school day and not make him feel that there is something freakish or different about him because he's leaving or the other kid is staying. This is my concern.

MR. McNEILL: What we're trying to answer is what can the public schools do about religious and spiritual development?

MRS. BURKHARDT: I think you can answer that question without committing this group on controversial subjects such as release time which hasn't anything to do, actually, with us because it has to be done by states.

MRS. MILLER: Well, I feel the schools should teach about religion.

MRS. BURKHARDT: Well, he has said that.

MRS. MILLER: That's right. Teach the cultures of religion, but not make it mandatory that a child go to religious school.

MR. McNEILL: All this says is that the school can do certain things about teaching moral and spiritual values, and it can cooperate with parents and churches in providing a workable and lawful program of religious instruction.

MR. SKALA: The question, should the schools....

MR. McNEILL: I think that comes right down to the word "lawful" and that word was included with great deliberation on my part. It can do that lawfully only in places where state legislation is enforced.

MR. SKALA: Even if it's lawful, I still question should a public school -- I'll buy moral and spiritual values and the teaching of it, where they don't separate in the religious beliefs and doctrine, etc. ....

MRS. MILLER: I feel that even recommending it to the states that already have made it a law, put their stamp of approval on it -- I don't approve of it even in those states where it happens to be a law. How many states have it, do you know?

MR. McNEILL: I think there are either 12 or 19. I don't know.

MR. SKALA: We can do it in Pennsylvania I know. I have yet to see what would be a good system of released time.

MRS. MILLER: It is not successful and not healthy for the other children.

MRS. BURKHARDT: You wouldn't even have to reword this. Just leave out that part about released time. You've said the other things so well.

MR. McNEILL: If you will look at the top of the paragraph on page 3..."It can teach such basic, moral and spiritual values as truthfulness, honesty, integrity, fair play in regard to the rights of others. It can cooperate with parents and churches in providing a workable and lawful program of religious instruction," then strike "the release time."

MRS. MILLER: Not "religious instruction."

MR. SKALA: I don't want you to get the feeling that I'm anti-religious, because I'm not. But there is a principle there that disturbs me.

MR. BENTON: Religious instruction, religious training is a function of the home and a function of the church.



MR. SKALA: I want to make sure that they have that freedom to have it.

MRS. MILLER: It says here that Americans are convinced that religious instruction is an integral part of the child's regular school experience. I would cross off the part about "the public schools may not teach positive religion as such. It can, however, and should teach such basic, moral and spiritual values as truthfulness, honesty, integrity, fair play in regard to the rights of other persons." That I would leave in too. But I don't like the rest of this.

MR. McNEILL: Well now, what do you think about the last paragraph of the section, that "it can and should teach factually and fairly about religion?"

MR. SKALA: I'll buy that.

MR. BACK: We have been listening to a portion of one of the round table discussions at the White House Conference on Education where TOWN MEETING is bringing you a special report on one of the conference topics: "What Should our Schools Accomplish?" The chairman at this particular table was Charles J. McNeill of Dayton, Ohio.

As I mentioned earlier, the 2,000 conference delegates assembled at 165 individual round table groups for simultaneous discussion of this same problem. Our rebroadcast of this part of the White House Conference will now conclude with the final report of the consensus of opinion, as compiled by a meeting of the chairmen of all the round tables, thus summarizing the views expressed by the entire delegation. The report is made by Dr. Adam Bennion of Salt Lake City, Chairman of the Utah White House Conference. Dr. Bennion!

DR. BENNION: It is the consensus of these groups that the schools should continue to develop:

1. The fundamental skills of communication -- reading and writing and spelling, as well as other elements of effective oral and written expression; the arithmetical and mathematical skills, including problem solving. While schools are doing the best job in their history, and the tables were unanimous in suggesting, if I may say it a little crudely in the language of one of the good men who spoke pretty freely -- we are all agreed that the schools of America need a pat on the back, not too far down. And so we said while the schools are doing the best job in their history in teaching these skills, continuous improvement is desirable and necessary.

2. An appreciation for our democratic heritage.

3. Civic rights and responsibilities and the knowledge of American institutions.

4. Respect and appreciation for human values and for the beliefs of others.

5. The ability to think and evaluate constructively and creatively.

6. Effective work habits and self-discipline.

7. Social competency as a contributing member of his family and his community.

8. Ethical behavior based on a sense of moral and spiritual values.

9. Intellectual curiosity and eagerness for life-long learning.

10. Esthetic appreciation and self-expression in the arts.



11. Physical and mental health.

12. The wise use of time, including constructive leisure pursuits.

13. Understanding of the physical world and man's relationship to it as represented in the basic knowledge of the sciences.

14. An awareness of our relationships with the world community. (And we had no idea we were working to a 14-point program.)

And then beyond these so-called basic, fundamental, general considerations:

To achieve these things for every child, the schools must have an effective program of guidance and counselling in preparation for the world of work.

In each school an appropriate balance must be maintained in the educational program to insure wholesome, all around development of the individual with provision for the stimulation and development of the useful talents of all children, including the retarded, the average and the gifted.

So that they can better appreciate the advantages of our democratic way of life, students should be provided with a well-balanced course in the social sciences which includes the historical development of our constitutional form of government, and the contributions which various cultures have made to it.

All children should be free to seek the truth wherever it can be found.

The school must accept responsibility in determining its place in working in cooperation with appropriate community institutions and agencies toward enriching the lives of its students. It must help them to apply ethical values which will guide their moral judgments and their conduct, and to develop the recognition that these values stem from, among other sources, their spiritual and religious convictions. On this latter point, more time is necessary for the complete development of a common viewpoint.

And finally, in the field of New Challenges to Education:

Consideration must be given to the need for continuing growth and development in education at all levels in amount and scope, to keep up with the economic, social and moral implications resulting from the advance in technology in a great progressive world.

MR. BACK: Dr. Adam Bennion of Salt Lake City has reported the consensus reached by delegates to the White House Conference on Education on one of its six topics, "What Should Our Schools Accomplish?" TOWN MEETING tonight has brought you a portion of this important national study of the problems facing our elementary and secondary school system -- a study which has been undertaken in every community throughout the country by local citizen groups, culminating in the White House Conference during the past week. You heard the keynote statement of Dr. James R. Killian, Jr., President of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a round table by delegates and the final report of the conference on this topic.

Our thanks to Clint Pace, director of The White House Conference on Education and the President's Committee, for making possible TOWN MEETING'S presentation of this important event.